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CIA Feared Exile 'Revolt,' Ex-Agency Official Reports

By DAVID WISE

New York Herald Tribune Wire

WASHINGTON — Richard M. Bissell Jr., the man who ran the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion for the Central Intelligence Agency, said Tuesday that the armed Cuban exile brigade might have tried to seize territory in Central America if it had not been sent to invade Cuba.

The suggestion that the CIA might have lost control of the Cuban exiles if President John F. Kennedy had canceled the invasion, and that the intelligence agency warned of this possibility had not been made publicly before. Bissell spoke out in a lengthy copyrighted interview in The Washington Evening Star.

The account was the latest in a series of stories that have revived debate over the disastrous Cuban invasion, the only setback of the Kennedy administration.

On Monday historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. wrote about the Bay of Pigs in Life Magazine. Thursday Theodore C. Sorensen will give his version in Look Magazine. Both men are former assistants to Kennedy, and both accounts are taken from books they will publish this fall.

In The Star interview, Bis-

sell said: "We did warn more than once that there would be a very difficult problem with this armed, highly motivated unit in case the operation were canceled. We had no final plan of what would become of it."

"They (the exiles) were the most powerful military force between Mexico and Panama, and it is entirely possible that they might have tried to seize a base in Nicaragua, Honduras or Guatemala. There is not the slightest doubt that they could have defeated any Guatemalan force."

It was the second time Bissell had broken silence since he resigned from the CIA in February 1962 during the shakeup that followed the Bay of Pigs invasion. On May 4, he was interviewed on an NBC-TV documentary, "The Science of Spying."

The former CIA deputy director for plans, who directed the U2 program for the intelligence agency, was interviewed in Hartford, where he is an executive of the United Aircraft Corp.

The exile force he spoke of was trained clandestinely in Guatemala by the CIA, and dispatched by President Kennedy on April 17, 1961, to invade the south coast of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. Training of the exiles had



Richard Bissell Jr.

former CIA agent

begin under President Dwight Eisenhower.

According to The Star interview, Bissell feels that President Kennedy's decision to cancel a second air strike by exile B26 bombers against Castro's airfields might have made a "critical difference" in the outcome of the invasion.

"If we had been able to dump five times the tonnage of bombs on Castro's airfields, we would have had a damned good chance," he said in the interview. Schles-

inger wrote that President Kennedy's decision to cancel the second strike was "an error" but not a "decisive" error.

The exile B26 bombers took off from Nicaragua and attacked Castro's air bases in the first strike. A CIA "cover story," announced in Miami, said it was the work of pilots defecting inside Cuba. President Kennedy canceled the second strike, scheduled for the day of the invasion, because the U.S. role was seeping out.